

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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HD **Globe Climate: Governments are starting to place their bets on the energy transition; Also: What dinosaurs can teach us about responding to a changing environment**
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Good afternoon, and welcome to Globe Climate, a newsletter about climate change, environment and resources in Canada.

Earlier this year, an aspiring paleontologist discovered a rare dinosaur skeleton at Horseshoe Canyon in the Badlands region of Alberta.

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Nathan Hrushkin, a Grade 7 student from Calgary, is probably going to have a “pretty killer résumé” after the find. But his discovery might do more than that.

François Therrien, curator of dinosaur paleoecology at the Royal Tyrrell Museum, said the find can help archaeologists learn more about not just the evolution of dinosaurs, but also how they [responded to their changing climate](#) and environment.

Now, let’s catch you up on other news.

Noteworthy reporting this week:

A deeper dive

Going nuclear

Ryan MacDonald is a senior editor at The Globe heading the climate, environment and resources team.

Governments are starting to place their bets on the energy transition.

The news that [Ottawa is investing \\$20-million to aid Oakville, Ont.-based Terrestrial Energy Inc.](#) to develop its small nuclear reactor technology is the latest in a wave of announcements coming from government around energy.

And when governments start to invest in companies directly, it’s a signal of where the cards are starting to be played in industrial policy.

Terrestrial is one of a host of companies in a race to commercialize a new generation of reactors and win a share of the low-carbon energy market. In the U.S., a Washington-based company chaired by Bill Gates called Terrapower [is getting its own grants from government](#) with an aim to build its first domestic

facility. Canada, for its part, believes it has a competitive advantage largely due to its nuclear successes so far. And the provinces are lining up to take part.

Small-scale nuclear technology has been talked about for years, but with [the cost of renewable-energy based systems dropping quickly](#), is a 300-megawatt reactor anything more than a distraction? Does using nuclear technology in the oil patch to lower emissions while extracting crude from the earth really represent progress?

To reach Canada's goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, watch for a mix of low-carbon energy investments from all levels of government. Nuclear is one, hydrogen is another, geothermal is another.

What all these investments have in common is one thing: jobs. The federal government estimates that by 2040 there will be 6,000 jobs in the small nuclear reactor sector in Canada, which will make a \$2-billion contribution to the economy. Ottawa's [highly anticipated hydrogen strategy](#) – to be released this fall – is touting the same kind of economic returns.

We are in interesting times. Governments are at once trying to balance the transition to a low-carbon economy with a green recovery during a global pandemic. There will be many, many more \$20-million cheques.

And that may be the biggest bet of all.

- Ryan

What else you missed

Silver particles in consumer goods found to harm fish in Ontario lake study: Researchers who laced a Northern Ontario lake with the material [as part of a multiyear experiment](#) say the adverse effects they measured in two species of fish were significant enough to warrant including the unregulated substance as part of Canada's water safety guidelines for the metal.

New quantum centre in Ontario to probe nature's deepest and weirdest secrets: Quantum matter is the [basic science behind](#) everything, from the next generation of supercomputers to power lines that can transmit electricity without losing any of it.

Great Barrier Reef might lose its ability to recover from bleaching: Record-breaking temperatures that [triggered bleaching](#) events in 2016 and 2017 have meant fewer small, baby corals and breeding adult ones.

Quebec oceanographer Louis Fortier became a leader in Arctic research: He [wasn't one to let an opportunity slip](#) through his fingers – especially not at the 11th hour. Dr. Fortier died on Oct. 4 from complications related to leukemia. He was 66.

Opinion and analysis

Future of Keystone XL hinges on U.S. presidential race

[Kelly Cryderman](#): "It's easier for an American politician to condemn a pipeline project originating in Canada, long in the crosshairs of environmental groups, than to run on policies that will cost existing jobs in Ohio or New Mexico. But it's a quandary for Alberta. Four out of five barrels of Canadian oil are shipped south of the border."

The world is betting on clean hydrogen – and Canada needs to get in the game

[Merran Smith and Sarah Petreva](#): "Hydrogen offers Canada an opportunity to sustain its role as an energy leader while cementing a role as a climate one."

Here's what readers had to say

'Plastic bags should be the last plastics to go.' Readers react to Canada's plastics ban, plus other letters to the editor

Re [Ottawa's Pledge To Ban Some Single-use Plastics Will Hurt Alberta's Recovery, Kenney Says](#) (Oct. 10): Plastics, especially single-use items, are having a negative effect on the climate. We should have national standards on the composition of plastics so they can be recycled or reused, while some are eliminated entirely.

Ottawa's announcement should be seen as a good thing for Alberta: Now the province can plan to expand the petrochemical sector in a meaningful way and perhaps become a world leader in that regard.

Stephen Crocker Edmonton

[Read other letters to the editor about plastic here](#)

Making waves

Each week The Globe will profile a young person making a difference in Canada. This week we're highlighting the work of Julia Sampson, who organizes in the climate justice movement.

My name is Julia Sampson (she/they) and I'm an 18-year-old student climate activist in Kijipuktuk (Halifax). I was involved in climate justice work when the [first climate strike](#) in Kijipuktuk was organized. We [also planned](#) a climate strike that took place September 25. I've been working with Climate Strike Canada, the [national strike group](#) in so-called Canada since 2019.

I organize in the movement because the climate crisis is not only threatening my future but also my present. Just last year we were hit by Hurricane Dorian and parts of Nova Scotia had no power for weeks. But this is about more than just how the climate crisis affects me; it's about how it affects marginalized communities in the form of environmental racism.

Last year we celebrated the success of a coal mine project being cancelled in Pictou County due [to local activism](#). This year, on a national level, we celebrated the Teck mine being rejected. This shows that grassroots organizing works. Whether it's in the form of organizing direct actions, attending them, promoting them or donating and signing petitions, anything helps.

Do you know an engaged young person? Someone who represents the real engines pursuing change in the country? Email us at GlobeClimate@globeandmail.com to tell us about them.

Photo of the week

Guides and Explainers

* We've rounded up our reporters' content to help you learn about sustainable ways to [live life at home](#), [travel](#), [invest](#), and generally to learn about our [species at risk](#).

* If you like to read, here are books to [help the environmentalist](#) in you grow, as well as a downloadable e-book of [Micro skills - Little Steps to Big Change](#).

Catch up on Globe Climate

* [It's a plastic world after all](#)

* [Special edition part 2: Down to business](#)

* [Special edition part 1: Fire and ice](#)

* [Is it time for Big Oil to kill itself slowly?](#)

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Follow this link to view this story on globeandmail.com: [Globe Climate: Governments are starting to place their bets on the energy transition](#)

The Globe and Mail

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